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REPORT OF THE COUNCIL.

MAY 27, 1879.

SINCE the last report, May 28, 1878, the Academy has received notice of the deaths of twelve members, as follows : six Fellows, Jacob Bigelow, Caleb Cushing, Silas Durkee, J. B. S. Jackson, John Clarke Lee, John M. Merrick, and B. F. Thomas ; three Associate Fellows, W. C. Bryant, S. T. Olney, and George B. Wood ; three foreign Honorary Members, Dove, Ritschl, and Rokitanski.

FELLOWS.

JACOB BIGELOW.

It is greatly to be regretted that the subject of the following brief notice had not just enough of pardonable egotism and serviceable vanity to induce him to leave some record of himself in the shape of an autobiography. His birth dated from the year in which the Constitution of the United States was adopted. He lived into the last decade of the century which is reckoned from that event. For sixty-seven years he was a member of this Academy, and from 1847 to 1863 he was its President. Sagacious, observant, conversant with men, an intelligent student of public affairs, a thoroughly capable man of business, fond of social intercourse, eminent in more than one branch of science, one of the best scholars the classical training of his time had to show for itself, one of the earliest cultivators of the fine arts among us, always active in his laborious profession, yet always with time to spare for other and varied duties, a record of his life during the busy threescore years which would leave an ample margin for the period of immaturity and that of decline — a record such as he would have made — would have been a precious bequest to posterity. Of this crowded life I can offer but a few scanty hints and memories.

Jacob Bigelow was born in Sudbury, Massachusetts, February 27, 1787. His father, the Rev. Jacob Bigelow, who graduated at Harvard College in 1766, was minister of Sudbury, dividing his time between the

duties of his country parish and the cultivation of a farm of thirty or forty acres. His mother, a woman of superior sense and cultivation, was the daughter of Gershom Flagg, of Boston.

His boyhood was spent in attending a country school during five or six months of the year, and the labors and amusements of a country life, work on the farm, the study of natural objects, and the exercise of his constructive ingenuity in various mechanical contrivances. In the mean time, he conceived a strong desire of obtaining a collegiate education; and, though his father would have repressed his somewhat precocious ambition of mastering the learned languages, he obtained a Latin grammar, and in the woods and other solitary places found means to become acquainted with declensions and conjugations.

At thirteen years of age, he was sent from home to "fit for college" under the tuition of the Rev. Samuel Kendall, of Weston, a man "much renowned," as he says, "in his parish, as a breaker of unruly horses and refractory boys." He seems to have made the most of his time in College, so far as his relations with the various societies, religious, literary, and social, were concerned, besides which he took part in conducting a poetic periodical circulated in manuscript, his associates being his classmates Alexander H. Everett and Joseph G. Cogswell. He graduated in 1806. His "part" at Commencement was a poem; and on taking his second degree, three years afterward, he was offered the English oration for the Master's degree, but declined the honor.

Having chosen the practice of medicine as his profession, he began its study on leaving college, teaching school at the same time in Worcester. After a year, he returned to Boston, where he continued his studies with Dr. John Gorham, supporting himself in the mean time by discharging the duties of Assistant Teacher in the Latin School. Here he continued to cultivate that knowledge of the classics which has always been one of his remarkable accomplishments. In 1809, he was licensed as a practitioner, and in 1810, after attending a course of lectures at Philadelphia, he took his medical degree at the University of Pennsylvania.

His introduction to the public as an author was in the form of three successive Boylston Prize Essays, one of which, that on Burns, is distinguished by original experiments of a simple and convincing character. After this, he delivered the annual poem before the Phi Beta Kappa Society, and gave a course of botanical lectures in association with Professor Peck, which course was afterwards twice repeated by Dr. Bigelow alone.

In 1814, he published the "*Florula Bostoniensis*," a description of the native plants of Boston and its vicinity. This work, which was the principal consulting manual of local botanists, went through three editions, with various successive enlargements. Dr. Bigelow's reputation became widely extended, and genera of plants were named after him by English, French, and German botanists. In the following year, 1815, he was appointed Professor of *Materia Medica* and Botany in the Medical School of Harvard University; and in 1816 he received the additional appointment of Rumford Professor in the University.

In 1818, Dr. Bigelow began the publication of the "*American Medical Botany*," a work which extended to three volumes octavo, with plates, colored by a new process of his own invention. In 1820 was published the first edition of the *Pharmacopœia* of the United States, prepared by the delegates of a convention appointed from the various medical colleges and societies of the United States. A committee of five, Dr. Spalding of New York, Dr. Hewson of Philadelphia, Dr. Bigelow of Boston, Dr. Ives of New Haven, and Dr. De Butts of Baltimore, were charged with the publication. The part assigned to Dr. Bigelow was the list and nomenclature of the *Materia Medica*. In performing this task, he departed from the common usage of the British colleges, and in all possible cases employed a single name for each drug in place of the double or triple names they had always used, a plan which is still adhered to in our National *Pharmacopœia*. He followed up this labor by publishing his practical treatise long familiar to the profession under the name of "*Bigelow's Sequel*," a succinct, judicious, and perspicuous commentary on the characters, qualities, and uses of the remedies adopted by the national medical representatives.

In 1825, Dr. Bigelow gave the first impulse to a great movement which has made itself felt in its beneficent influences throughout the whole length and breadth of the country. His attention had been accidentally called to the gross abuses associated with the system of intramural burials. In consequence of this, he invited about a dozen gentlemen to meet at his house in Summer Street, to consider the expediency of instituting an extra-urban, ornamental cemetery in the neighborhood of Boston. This meeting, after long delays and discussions, found the fulfilment of its suggestions in the creation of the cemetery of "*Mount Auburn*," consecrated in 1831, the first institution of the kind in the United States, and the pattern after which have been modelled a great number of similar institutions, which have been grow-

ing up, during the last thirty or forty years, in the neighborhood of our chief cities and towns. It is hard to overrate the importance of this great innovation on the time-honored custom which was fast becoming a nuisance to the public health and an offence to the common feelings of humanity. The close-packed tombs, liable to be used by unscrupulous sextons as lodging-houses for any homeless dead whose means would purchase a temporary resting-place; the graves where one body was piled on another until only a few inches of soil covered the last-comer's coffin-lid, — gave place to the peaceful and secure rural retreat where the dead could repose undisturbed and the living could resort with pleasure. Not only was the project of the Mount Auburn Cemetery due to Dr. Bigelow, but he furnished the designs for the fence and gateway, the chapel and the tower, and for more than twenty years officiated as President of the Corporation.

In 1830, Dr. Bigelow published the "Elements of Technology," a treatise on the application of the sciences to the useful arts, taken chiefly from the lectures delivered by him as Rumford Professor at Cambridge. This most convenient and valuable manual has since been reprinted (1840) with additions, in two volumes, under the title "The Useful Arts."

In 1832, Dr. Bigelow was commissioned by the City of Boston, with the late Dr. John Ware and Dr. Joshua B. Flint, to visit New York to observe and report on the Asiatic cholera, then prevailing in that city. So great was the fear of contagion at the time, that the Committee, returning in one of the Sound steamers, were stopped a mile below Providence by the health officers, and forbidden to come on shore. Landing at Seekonk, they at length, after waiting a whole day, made their way to Boston in stage-coaches.

In 1835, Dr. Bigelow delivered, as the annual address before the Massachusetts Medical Society, his well-known discourse on "Self-limited Diseases." This remarkable essay has probably had more influence on medical practice in America than any similar brief treatise, we might say than any work, ever published in this country. Its suggestions were scattered abroad at the exact fertilizing moment when public opinion was matured enough for their reception. The essay of Louis on blood-letting in pneumonia had shaken the belief of many in the "strangling" of disease by heroic remedies. The French expectant practice had been watched in the hospitals of Paris by multitudes of students, who had become accustomed to see patient waiting and mild palliatives take the place of the perturbing measures familiar to English and American usage. Dr. Bigelow's discourse

summed up the question between nature and medical art so fairly and so clearly, that from that day forward the empirical habit of interference, for the sake of interfering, with the course of a self-evolving and self-terminating disease may be said to have declined.

This essay was republished in a volume, with sixteen other papers, in the year 1854. Every one of these papers will be found marked by the characteristic excellences of the writer, from the Experiments on the Effects of Different Methods of Treating Burns, the Boylston Prize Dissertation before referred to, to the Address delivered before this Academy at the opening of their course of Lectures in 1852. Another little volume, "Expositions of Rational Medicine," published in 1858, illustrated the doctrine of the Discourse on Self-limited Diseases in a fable called "The Paradise of Doctors," followed by a short essay and an appendix, containing a reprint of a part of an article by Sir John Forbes in the British Foreign Medical Review. Dr. Bigelow always selected the right subject; he always knew just what iron was lying white on the anvil. He had the art in which the telegraph has been giving the new generation lessons, — that of using just as many words as were needed to convey his meaning clearly, and no more, except that his wit or his learning would betray itself now and then by a lively illustration or an apposite quotation. He always went straight for the vital point in the subject he was handling: it was he who in our debates before societies waited until others had teased the subject under discussion until it was wearied and bewildered, and then gave it the *coup de grâce*. His style was that of a scholar who wears his robes of learning with such ease that no common-sense movement of his intelligence is hindered or made awkward by them. The President of our Historical Society, Mr. Winthrop, always felicitous in his characterizations, has coupled the name of Dr. Bigelow with that of "the great Bostonian," Benjamin Franklin. No comparison could be happier. Franklin was not college-bred, like our contemporary; but he had a literary turn, and composed ballads in his early youth, and used language as simple and lucid as any man who ever wrote English. Both were good-natured and good-tempered; both had a charming vein of pleasantry, which often showed itself in genuine wit and humor; both were abounding in mechanical ingenuity; both had a shrewd eye for the practical, and knew well how to handle their resources so as to make them tell with the best effect; both questioned the universe in a smiling, half-philosophical, half-practical sort of way, having, as one might say, a constitutional trust that things would come out right in the end; both, it may be suspected, carried a good many unsolved

problems quietly resting a little out of sight, — certainly not aggressively thrust forward, — in a receptacle like that in which Time puts alms for oblivion. I should form this opinion with regard to Dr. Bigelow, chiefly from the habit of his mind, which was that of exploring Thomas rather than of visionary Paul; for I never knew him wanting in reverence, and I have known him to manifest impatience at what he thought was a want of it.

The last great movement in which Dr. Bigelow took an active part was that in favor of a change in the educational system by which the classical languages should cease to be the exclusive or chief tests of a liberal training. Professor W. P. Atkinson had recently called attention to the state of education, especially as it regarded the classics and scientific studies in the great schools of England. Dr. Bigelow referred to this as a convincing exposition of the state of education in those institutions, and, following his usual direct method of proceeding, made a practical application of the facts there given, illustrated with a good sense and epigrammatic force all his own, to the condition of things among ourselves. His two papers bearing on this subject, "On the Limits of Education" (1865), and "On Classical and Utilitarian Studies" (1866), were published with other essays in a volume entitled "Modern Inquiries" (1867).

After a record like this, it seems almost trivial to refer to the literary diversions in which from time to time, generally without attaching his name to them, he was in the habit of indulging. I think it probable that he wrote more frequently in the papers than any of his friends were aware; for I remember more than one article of his, the authorship of which was not generally known. His *jeux d'esprit* could hardly help betraying themselves, in some instances at least. One of the most famous was the poem written on the occasion of the transplantation of the ginkgo-tree from the garden of Mr. Gardiner Green to Boston Common. Another of his happiest efforts was the Latin song written for the Harvard Centennial in 1836. It deserves every epithet Cicero bestowed on the oration which he called *concinnam, distinctam, ornatam, festivam*. The little volume of playful parodies called "Eolopoesis" has always been attributed to him, without having its authorship disputed. These productions were the mere overflow of a mind full of wit as well as wisdom.

Dr. Bigelow has done more than adorn all that he has touched: he has illuminated and enriched, as well as embellished, a range of subjects so wide that it becomes a wonder how he could embrace them all. Few citizens of the republic, certainly no member of the medical

profession, can be said to have identified himself with so many and such permanent contributions to the public welfare. He was fortunate in living to see the science for which he labored in his youth flourishing in the hands of able successors who have given their lives to it, to behold the whole land beautified with those rural cemeteries of which he furnished the American model in Mount Auburn, to witness the establishment of a more philosophical and safer medical practice as a consequence of his outspoken appeal to nature and common sense, and to enjoy the prospect of a more liberal administration in our colleges and universities as a reward for his manly plea in behalf of the more practical branches of knowledge.

It would be hard to find any one better fitted to wrestle with the years that close the labors of a long protracted life than was the strong and firm-souled man whose career through its more active period we have been glancing over. His constitution was robust, his habits were more than temperate, his mind always active, but working easily in every kind of service to which he called it. And there never was a man who accepted the combat with his growing infirmities in a more courageous and cheerful spirit. In the year 1870, at the age of eighty-three, he was still in the possession of much bodily vigor and mental vitality. He took a fancy to pay a visit to the other side of the continent, and carried it out with all the spirit of his younger days. On his return, he wrote a very lively and pleasant little poem, recalling the vivacity of the lines to the ginkgo-tree and others of his earlier efforts. In the same year, he wrote, and read at a meeting of persons interested, the Essay on Education before referred to. But the time was near at hand for all his active labors to cease.

With the exception of some deafness on one side and the fracture of an arm by a fall, I do not recollect his ever suffering from any infirmity that made itself manifest until the last decade of his life. A dimness of sight, which came on very gradually, was the first sign which made itself obvious. It was found after a time that this dimness was owing to the formation of cataracts in both eyes. It was quite wonderful to see the way in which he accepted a fact so threatening to the happiness of his remaining years. He seemed to look upon himself with curiosity as the subject of an experiment by Nature. What he had to do was to train another sense to perform the task of the one which was failing. His description of the way in which he taught his hands to work without the guidance of sight was given with so much apparent delight that one might have thought he enjoyed more in perfecting the groping organs of tact than he suffered in losing the swift illimitable potency of vision.

Books at length could no longer serve his failing sight; still he recognized the faces of those around him, and was gladdened by the cheerful light of morning. But the curtains were drawn closer and closer, until at last he could distinguish his friends only by their voices. And, as the years moved onward, each took something from the gradually yielding organization. A loss of power in the lower limbs rendered him helpless, and soon confined him wholly to his bed. Who could have wondered if the burden of his lamentation had borrowed the words which Milton puts in the mouth of the blind captive, — the strong man of Israel?

“ Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,
Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse
Without all hope of day ! ”

Not such were the words, not such was the spirit in which this once strong man, now blind and bound in chains heavier than any captive wears, spoke with his visitors. He greeted them with the same cheerful cordiality with which he had received them in health. His mind showed much of its old vivacity. He was often intensely interested in conversation; and his sense of the ridiculous, which in him was the sign of exuberant life in a happy temperament and a quick and penetrating intelligence, had lost nothing of its acuteness at a time when his bodily infirmities had become such as to render him entirely helpless.

Dr. Bigelow's life at this time was a kind of intellectual hibernation. He was living on the stores of a long and active period of mental labor and acquisition. He called on his memory to restore its buried treasures, and it obeyed him with singular docility. Passages from the classic authors, from his favorite English poets, Byron especially, retraced themselves at his bidding, with an accuracy that was surprising. Not long before the closing stage of mental decline, I remember talking with him about his reminiscences of the physicians of an earlier generation. He always had a keen eye for every kind of pretension, and could let the nonsense out of a tumid celebrity with an epigrammatic phrase or a characteristic anecdote in a way which would have made him terrible, had he not been very good-natured and altogether too knowing to give babblers and simpletons a chance to quarrel with him. He never said a malicious thing in my hearing; but when there was nothing to restrain him, he made very short work with overrated celebrities, and the “most magnanimous mouse” that had been pronounced a lion subsided into his proper and harmless dimensions, under his handling, with wonderful celerity. There never was a kinder sat-

irist than he: not only did he refrain from the use of poisoned shafts, but he kept his arrows so carefully in their quiver that only a friend, who was privileged to feel their points now and then, knew how sharp they were, and how dangerous they might be. His parodies were ingenious, with no venomous stinging about them. Consequently he made no enemies. He kept his wit perfectly in hand, and never let it betray him into personalities, — at least after his college days, when he indulged in an *excursus* or two which showed what a formidable weapon his ridicule could be, if he chose to wield it.

I was in the habit of visiting Dr. Bigelow from time to time long after the period at which the strength of our days was said of old to be labor and sorrow. But my visits were cheerful, except for the sight of the once strong man now blind and helpless in the bed from which he was never to rise. He smiled a welcome as always, laughed on occasion almost as heartily as ever, spoke of his remarkable freedom from all pain and discomfort, and wore on his features the look of serene repose.

I will close my sketch by repeating a few words from my remarks at a meeting of the Massachusetts Historical Society, where I was called to speak informally, at one of their meetings, of their late associate: —

The faculties still declined, gently, gradually, but surely, the mysterious presence of life still revealing itself in the simpler and humbler forms which belong to its infancy and its worn-out stage of decay. But the intellect still asserted itself in certain limited portions of the thinking centre. When life had become little more than mere existence, and persons were hardly if at all recognized, he would finish a quotation from some favorite author, if a few words or a line of verse were mentioned in his hearing. He would even go back, if he had made a mistake, and correct it with automatic accuracy. This mechanical action of the memory could not fail to recall the way in which the phonograph repeats a few connected words of the last sentence which has been dictated to it before it begins reciting its new lesson. Could he have watched the gradual extinction of his faculties, as the dying Haller felt the artery at his own wrist, as he himself had watched the progress of his gradual loss of sight, he would have studied

“ with eye serene
The very pulse of the machine,”

and noted the phenomena of mental decadence as quietly as in his earlier years he watched the disrobing of the flowers which were

dropping their petals. But Nature drugs the victim of her last experiment, and her anodyne saves him from the spectacle of his own transformation from the strong man up to whom others looked, and on whom they leaned, to the helpless invalid whose weakness only pitying eyes behold, and whose little remnant of life is only prolonged by the hourly ministry of gentle and loving hands.

We look back through these last years of infirmity, and see the quick-witted student, the hard-working young physician, the enthusiastic botanist, the accomplished scholar, the eminent practitioner, the sententious, finished, and effective writer; the reformer, who, in a lecture of one hour, inaugurated such a change of medical opinion and practice as no other essay or work by an American author ever did in this country; the social innovator, who, by his origination of rural cemeteries, has done more for the beauty and health of our whole land than perhaps any other one man has ever effected; the philosopher, who in health was the most cheerful as well as one of the most unwearied of workers, and who, when the evil days came upon him, in which he might have been excused for saying, "There is no pleasure in them," bore every burden of infirmity which was laid upon him with more than resignation, — with an unfaltering equanimity which makes his years of weakness as memorable as those of his strength and activity.

HON. CALEB CUSHING, LL.D.

THE HON. CALEB CUSHING, LL.D., died at his residence, in Newburyport, Massachusetts, on the 2d of January last. Born on the 17th of January, 1800, he was on the verge of completing his seventy-ninth year. He was graduated at Harvard University, as the third scholar in rank, in the distinguished class of 1817, and remained at the University for two years as Tutor in Mathematics and Natural Philosophy. He soon afterwards entered on the practice of the law, for which he had studied at Cambridge in the mean time. From this period, his long life was filled out, almost to the very end, with professional or public labors, and no man of his time has left a record of more indefatigable industry. He was the Representative of Newburyport in the Legislature of Massachusetts in 1825, and was repeatedly in the service of the State, either as Representative or Senator, in subsequent years. In 1835 he was elected to the House of Representatives of the United States, and remained a member of that body, by successive elections in the Essex District, until 1843. He was then